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## An Experimental Course of Study for Secondary Students in the Use of Magazines

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### THE PHILOSOPHY AND ROLE OF THE TEACHER

The attempt to carry out an experimental course of study for high school students in the use of magazines, newspapers, and radio is an acceptance of the philosophy of education embodied in the seven cardinal objectives. The program also accepts as basic the ten imperative needs of youth formulated by the Educational Policies Commission. The effort is indicative of a belief in the dual responsibility of meeting both the needs, interests, and abilities of youth and the requirements of society as a whole.

The philosophy, however, does not necessarily imply that all these needs are met equally well. Civic competence, consumer education, vocational guidance, and worthy home membership may be stressed in varying degrees at various times. However, it appears that the study of magazines, newspapers, and the radio would be particularly effective in meeting three imperative needs of youth:

"All youth need opportunities to develop their capacities to appreciate beauty in literature, art, music, and nature."

"All youth need to be able to use their leisure time well and to budget it wisely, balancing activities that yield satis-

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EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the first of two articles by Miss Lawson. The second article, dealing with radio, will be printed in the December issue, together with the bibliography to which the numbers in this article refer.

factions to the individual with those that are socially useful."

"All youth need to grow in their ability to think rationally, to express their thoughts clearly, and to read and listen with understanding." <sup>55</sup>

If all youth need to grow in ability "to read and listen with understanding," it is indeed necessary to consider the changing characteristics of the modern high school. It no longer represents only the highly selective college-bound group. Instead, there is a steady increase in the number of pupils often called dull normal. These are "the educationally neglected students" who loathe classics but who often find in newspapers and magazines, especially if well taught, teen-age appeal. Thus increased competence in the comprehension of newspapers and of magazines may not only increase the holding power of the secondary school, but stimulate more wholesome post-school reading so essential in a real democracy.

While the superior students still learn much from "conventional classics," we must also accept the philosophy that education does not come from books alone. Indeed, "anything which will stimulate in a student an activity likely to direct future action, feeling, or thinking in desirable ways, constitutes effective material and means of instruction." <sup>52</sup> Therefore we are not only justified in using but almost compelled to utilize effectively magazines, newspapers, and radio as means of improving the powers of discrimination of the one-talent, the five-talent, and the ten-talent students found in our secondary schools.

True, radio, magazines, and — to a lesser degree — newspapers are already of some concern to all secondary pupils. Consequently, making a study of them as part of the curriculum is following a sound psychological principle; it is true "that learning is more significant and permanent when it relates to the learner's concerns." <sup>48</sup>

It is not enough, however, to be psychologically sound in the use of materials and in methodology. The teacher's role is an important one. Not only must she have a knowledge of practical adolescent psychology, but she must be the "kindly light" that leads into wisely chosen pathways. Thus, even to the extent of being called "low brow," she must acquaint herself with comics, with pulp magazines, and with inferior radio programs so that she will have a first-hand acquaintance with the poor, the average, and the best in these three fields of communication.



Thus far, because of a lack of materials and a feeling of inadequacy on the part of teachers, instruction in the use of magazines, newspapers, and radio has often been far from stimulating. Therefore "teachers colleges, state and county departments of education, and the administrative units of city school systems should develop more effective programs for the pre-service and in-service training of teachers in the use" <sup>41</sup> of mass media for instructional purposes.

Finally, "the schools in all types of community . . . must address themselves to the task of improving the level of community life in the areas which they serve." <sup>48</sup> Magazines, newspapers, and radio represent a powerful triangle leading to a more constructive use of out-of-school time and to a fervent acceptance of this fact: "The education of to-morrow should give a new appreciation of leisure and its usefulness, and a new sense of citizenship and cooperation." <sup>56</sup>

### SUGGESTIONS FOR USE

The following material represents a workshop project at Northwestern University during the summer of 1949. Originally the manuscript contained a unit on newspapers; but, since the April issue of the *Illinois English Bulletin* gave a treatment of this topic, the newspaper unit is excluded. Nevertheless, the complete bibliography utilized in the study is included with the hope that it may be of value to teachers engaged in experimental teaching of mass communication.

The courses of study which follow do not represent either completeness or perfection; however, they do offer some initial guidance in carrying out instruction in mass media instruction. Eventually the course should be expanded to include movies. Here, the approach would not be an audio-visual one, but rather an extension of the beneficial influences of the school into the home, into the community, and into adulthood.

The experimental course is definitely flexible in choice of materials, in time allotment, and in grade placement. The teacher could choose the topics which best meet her specific needs, and even add considerable material to any one topic. Moreover, the time allotment might be two weeks or an entire quarter, or even scattered days throughout the semester.

For grade placement, I suggest the following plans:

I. The entire project might well be a part of the common learnings program.

II. Various topics as part of the English program could be treated in secondary grades thus:

- A. Sophomore.....magazines, movies
- B. Junior.....radio, newspapers
- C. Senior.....a more scholarly presentation of all four fields: magazines, movie, radio, newspapers

III. After limited experience with my own course of study during the school year of 1949-1950, I found genuine teen-age appeal. At the same time I noted that the course covered so much material that it could be utilized for an entire semester in English IV. Here the complete program would be correlated with American literature. Naturally, not everything in the present traditional course would be covered; nevertheless, much American literature would be taught. The following sequence is suggested:

- A. First quarter (5 weeks).....magazines
- B. Second quarter.....newspapers
- C. Third quarter.....radio
- D. Fourth quarter.....movies

A familiarity with the mass media of communications; an understanding of adolescent needs and interests; an acute awareness of the complex problems of the contemporary world; the scholarship, enthusiasm, initiative, and originality of the teacher—all these would be needed to secure that “survival of democracy” dependent upon “a critical and intelligent public which applies rigid standards of quality to all its sources of information and entertainment.”<sup>47</sup>

## TWO GENERAL OBJECTIVES

1. To stimulate the high school student to more effective discrimination in the use of magazines and of radio.
2. To utilize the progress in power of discrimination as a means of stimulating improvement in the quality of magazines and of radio, and thus bring benefit both to the high school adolescent and to society as a whole.

## WHY MAGAZINES?

Since the “total average circulation per issue of magazines reporting to the Audit Bureau of Circulation . . . was 167.5 million in 1947,” we as educators must recognize the “mounting importance of the new mass magazines in influencing public opinion.”



Whether that public opinion will result in good or evil depends both upon the quality of the numerous magazines and upon the quality of their readers.

In attempting to secure satisfactory life adjustments for every youth, the high school should definitely include in its curriculum a unit on the study of magazines, which, if wisely chosen, will bring the world to the student, acquainting him with important men and important movements and informing him on significant problems in the very complex contemporary world.

The experimental unit presented is flexible in time allotment, in choice of materials, and in grade placement. While primarily intended for English classes with special emphasis on either American or contemporary literature, the suggested course of study can also serve as a helpful enrichment of social studies and of other school subjects.

The tentative course includes a definite attempt to allow for differentiation in assignment—a differentiation adapted to varying needs, interests, and abilities. Thus the less able students might be led to substitute for pulp magazines wholesome ones of average reading difficulty; indeed, an extensive, often free, reading of much relatively simple but interesting material would be of a remedial character in stimulating an increase both in rate and in comprehension. The average or partially neglected sixty per cent might raise their general level of magazine reading by an occasional perusal of a superior magazine or of a thought-provoking article. As for the more able students, they too would gain by being introduced to quality magazines which might otherwise be completely ignored. They also would be the ones who would profit most by definite training in the use of *The Readers' Guide*.

In a serious effort to improve the reading tastes of high school students, we might secure the formation of a valuable reading habit for adult life, a habit which would help to promote a more enlightened citizenship so essential in a democracy. Finally, in attempting to satisfy the American's appetite for practical information, we could readily accept the statement made by James Playsted Wood, "Our magazines of today, considered as a broad group, give us a very impressive exhibit of democracy working."<sup>11</sup>

### MAGAZINE OBJECTIVES

1. To bring wholesome enjoyment combined with improvement in the quality of magazine reading.
2. To provide an additional activity for a more effective use of leisure time.

3. To increase the holding power of the high school by providing for the non-academic pupils a more satisfying reading experience than that offered by traditional courses or by formal text books.
4. To stimulate the superior student to more effective leadership in a democracy by acquainting him with "quality magazines."
5. To meet the needs, the interests, and the abilities of all youth by generous but carefully directed exposure to wholesome magazines varying both in contents and in degree of reading difficulty.
6. To raise ultimately the general level of the community by utilizing magazines to bring in a more readable form the contemporary world and its various problems.

### I. Basic reading materials

- A. Wood, James Playsted, *Magazines in the United States: Their Social and Economic Influence*
- B. *Magazines*
  1. Individual copies from East High School library
  2. Class sets purchased by the English Department
    - a. *Coronet*
    - b. *Life*
    - c. *Literary Cavalcade*
    - d. *Reader's Digest*
- C. Testing aids furnished by magazines
  1. *Coronet*
  2. *Reader's Digest*

### II. Initial approach: teen-age interests

- A. Brief report upon favorite magazine
  1. Recent issue brought to class
  2. Reasons for popularity
- B. Use of "ranking given by high school students to the fifteen magazines other than comics read most frequently by both sexes" <sup>7</sup>

Name	Rank
<i>Reader's Digest</i>	1.0
<i>Life</i>	2.0
<i>Saturday Evening Post</i>	3.0
<i>Ladies Home Journal</i>	4.0
<i>McCall's Magazine</i>	5.0
<i>Good Housekeeping</i>	6.0

<i>Name</i>	<i>Rank</i>
<i>Collier's</i>	7.0
<i>National Geographic</i>	8.0
<i>Scholastic</i>	9.0
<i>Popular Science</i>	10.0
<i>Time</i>	11.0
<i>Popular Mechanics</i>	12.0
<i>American Magazine</i>	13.0
<i>Esquire</i>	14.0
<i>Look</i>	15.5

1. Survey of student vote upon three favorites from above list
2. Class discussion of possible reasons for ranking including both
  - a. Approval of choice and placement
  - b. Disapproval of choice and placement
3. Careful reading and self-directed report upon one unfamiliar magazine from list of fifteen

### III. List, alphabetically arranged, of magazines found in East library

- A. Two days of class time browsing directed by the teacher
- B. Introduction of ten "quality" magazines to all pupils
  1. *Atlantic Monthly*
  2. *Fortune*
  3. *Harper's*
  4. *Newsweek*
  5. *Saturday Review of Literature*
  6. *Scientific American*
  7. *Theater Arts Monthly*
  8. *Time*
  9. *Travel*
  10. *United States News*

### IV. Combination of two activities (at least two weeks)

- A. Actual reading of magazines
  1. Free or nearly free reading of magazines in library
  2. Assignment
    - a. Ten or more enjoyable magazine articles from ten or more magazines
    - b. Inclusion of
      - (1) At least one quality magazine
      - (2) Unfamiliar magazine



(3) Five or more quality magazine articles definitely assigned to superior students

c. Brief but carefully written report including student reaction expressed in one carefully written sentence

Magazine	Date	Article	Sentence	Comment
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B. Individual or class assignments: Recommended chapters from Wood

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Title</i>
2.	"Magazine Beginning in America"
3.	"Magazines as National Educators"
4.	"Early General Magazines as a Literary and Crusading Force"
8.	"Magazines as a Weapon Against Political Corruption"
10.	"Edward Bok and the American Home"
11.	"Further Accomplishments of the Women's Magazines"
12.	"Social Consciousness of Magazines: <i>The Muckrakers</i> "
13.	"Magazine Reflection of a Nation: <i>The Saturday Evening Post</i> "
17.	"The Digest Magazine"
18.	"Magazine Satire and Humor: <i>The New Yorker</i> "
20.	"Influence on the Reader and the Social Group"
21.	"Magazines in Two World Wars"
22.	"Magazine Publishing To-Day"

## V. Additional information about magazines

A. Contents

1. Current events
2. Essays
3. Poems
4. Short stories

B. Of value to various occupational groups

C. Popular treatment of

1. Biography
2. Travel
3. Art
4. Science
5. Business



- D. Articles on special subjects, such as
  - 1. Birds
  - 2. Stamps
  - 3. Radio
  - 4. Aviation
  - 5. Theater
  - 6. Sports
  - 7. Hobbies
- E. Profiles or biographical essays on important people in contemporary world
- F. Why people read magazines
  - 1. For entertainment
  - 2. For increase in knowledge
  - 3. For conversational material
  - 4. For escape
  - 5. For practical information
  - 6. For inspiration
- G. Important magazine publishers and editors
  - 1. Curtis, Cyrus H. K.
  - 2. Lorimer, George Horace
  - 3. Bok, Edward
  - 4. McClure, Samuel Sidney
  - 5. Luce, Henry

## VI. Magazine publishing companies

- A. Curtis Publishing Company
  - 1. *Saturday Evening Post*                      general weekly
  - 2. *Country Gentleman*                      agricultural
  - 3. *Ladies Home Journal*                      woman's magazine
  - 4. *Jack and Jill*                      children's
  - 5. *Holiday*                      recreational
- B. Time Inc.
  - 1. *Time*                      weekly news
  - 2. *Life*                      pictorial weekly
  - 3. *Fortune*                      business, government,  
social problems
  - 4. *Architectural Forum*                      special interest
- C. Crowell-Collier Publishing Company
  - 1. *Collier's*                      general weekly
  - 2. *American Magazine*                      general monthly
  - 3. *Woman's Home Companion*                      woman's monthly

## D. Hearst Magazines

- |                             |                   |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. <i>Good Housekeeping</i> | woman's magazine  |
| 2. <i>Harper's Bazaar</i>   | sacred to fashion |
| 3. <i>House Beautiful</i>   | woman's magazine  |
| 4. <i>Cosmopolitan</i>      | family monthly    |
| 5. <i>Town and Country</i>  | special interest  |

## E. McCall Corporation

- |                             |                  |
|-----------------------------|------------------|
| 1. <i>McCall's Magazine</i> | woman's magazine |
| 2. <i>Redbook</i>           | general interest |

## F. Meredith Publishing Company

- |                                    |               |
|------------------------------------|---------------|
| 1. <i>Successful Farming</i>       | agricultural  |
| 2. <i>Better Homes and Gardens</i> | home magazine |

## G. Capper's Publications

- |                           |                       |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. <i>Reader's Digest</i> | first digest magazine |
| 2. <i>Farm Journal</i>    | agricultural          |

## VII. Training in use of *Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature*.

- A. A magic key to magazines
- B. Material: authors, titles of poems and short stories, subjects of all articles that can be found in over one hundred magazines
- C. Points to observe
  1. Title of article
  2. Whether or not article is illustrated
  3. Title of magazine
  4. Volume number
  5. Page
  6. Date

## VIII. Possible use of helpful supplementary material

- A. Greer, Arsdale, Wilber, Mead, *Prose and Poetry Adventures*  
 "Remedial Reading for Speed." Magazine Acquaintance
  1. "Adjective Trouble." *Scholastic*
  2. "Power to come by Radio." *Popular Mechanics*
  3. "They Bring Plague." *Nature Magazine*
- B. Paul, *Units in English*, Book I
  1. Outline for reporting upon favorite magazines
  2. Suggestions for evaluation of unfamiliar magazine

- C. Broening, Law, Wilkinson, Ziegler, *Reading for Skill*
1. List of annotated magazines
  2. Use of index for information about and selections from various magazines
  3. Information on use of *Readers' Guide*
- D. Wood, Husband, Bacon, *Fact and Opinion*. "A Book of Nonfiction prose"
- |                  |                             |          |
|------------------|-----------------------------|----------|
| 1. Section one   | Nonfiction                  | "Shorts" |
| 2. Section two   | Digests                     |          |
| 3. Section three | Articles                    |          |
| 4. Section four  | Condensation and Adaptation |          |
| 5. Section five  | Excerpts                    |          |

## IX. Magazine study leading to use of three other types of communication

### A. Oral

1. Experience sharing in informal, well-prepared reports upon individual magazine experiences
2. Panel discussion under student leadership
3. Debate on
  - a. Specific magazine
  - b. Specific magazine article
4. Use of superior students as student teachers in presenting some chapters listed in Wood's *Magazines in the United States*

### B. Written

1. Letter telling friend about magazine experiences
2. Theme—"My Personal Reactions to Magazine Study"
3. Five hundred or thousand word theme utilizing magazines
  - a. Subject of particular interest to pupil
  - b. Use of *Readers' Guide* by superior or college-preparatory pupils
4. Annotation of magazines read
5. Brief reports as suggested in IV
6. Paragraphs developed by
  - a. Giving details
  - b. Giving examples
  - c. Giving reasons
  - d. Using comparison or contrast
  - e. Using restatement



C. Literature—communication of thought (Correlation with American literature)

1. "Democracy in the Making as Reflected in Magazine Article." *Illinois English Bulletin*. March, 1949, p. 4
2. American authors associated with magazines
  - a. Benjamin Franklin, *General Magazine* (literally a magazine or storehouse of varied material)
  - b. Edgar Allan Poe
    - (1) Literary editor of *Graham's Magazine*
    - (2) Editor of *Literary Messenger*
    - (3) A magazinist using magazines for
      - (a) Short stories
      - (b) Verse
      - (c) Critical articles
  - c. Ralph Waldo Emerson, *The Dial*
  - d. Henry D. Thoreau, *The Dial*
  - e. James Russell Lowell (First editor of *Atlantic Monthly*)
  - f. Nathaniel Hawthorne (Edited *The American Magazine of Useful and Entertaining Knowledge*)
  - g. Oliver Wendell Holmes. (First installment of *Autocrat of the Breakfast Table* published in 128 page first issue of *The Atlantic Monthly*)
  - h. Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Atlantic Monthly*
  - i. James Greenleaf Whittier, "Skipper Ireson's Ride," in second issue of *Atlantic Monthly*
3. Related material as found in literature anthologies
4. Use of Bok's survey technique
  - a. What in the magazine did they like least?
  - b. What did they like best? Why?
  - c. What new features would they like to see started?

X. Suggested correlated outside reading

A. Bok, *Americanization of Edward Bok*

B. Dobie, J. Frank

1. *Apache Gold and Yaqui Silver* (Collection of lost mine lore)
2. *Coronado's Children* (Literary Guild, 1938. Legends of lost gold and silver mines of the Spaniards)
3. *A Texan in England* (More recent book)
4. *A Vaquero of the Brush Country* (Recounts life of one of the early great cattlemen of South Texas)

- C. Franklin, Benjamin, *Autobiography*
- D. Hawthorne, Hildegard, *The Happy Warrior* (Oliver Wendell Holmes)
- E. Hawthorne, Hildegard, *The Poet of Craigie House* (Longfellow)
- F. Hawthorne, Hildegard, *Romantic Rebel* (Nathaniel Hawthorne)
- G. Hersey, John, *Hiroshima*, (First published in *New Yorker* August, 1946)
- H. Holt, Rackham, *George Washington Carver*
- I. Van Doren, Carl, *Benjamin Franklin*
- J. Whitney, George, *Young Edgar Allen Poe* (The youthful Poe: poet, critic, and writer of weird, fantastic tales)

# Freshmen—The Problems That Confront Them

By FLORENCE E. BAIN

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For several years I have taught freshmen English classes in the high school at Newark, New York. Our principal, Mr. Sidney MacArthur, is keenly interested in the modern trends of education, and two years ago he had the entire faculty take an extension course given by professors who came here each week from Syracuse University. The aims we established were to modify the course of study to fit the needs of the students, to correlate the program as much as possible, and to revise the curriculum where necessary in order to promote sound, progressive education. We were allowed much leeway in experimentation.

From my own contact with and observation of the pupils, conversation with other teachers, interest in the theories brought out in our course of study, and an endeavor to evaluate my own teaching, I finally developed a course of study which has proved successful in this school. Although it is a unit of literature and composition designed as background study and explanatory material for such ninth grade subjects as social studies, vocational guidance, introduction to business, and homemaking in the area of economics and personality development, it is vitally concerned with conditions which are vastly more urgent and important to the young teen-ager—namely those basic problems arising from group living and the ideals he lives by.

Up to the age of fourteen or thereabout, many children seem to be conspicuously self-centered, and ethical conflicts and issues which are very significant to adults escape them entirely, or at best touch them lightly. As they become involved in the situations arising from human relationships, they are sometimes bewildered and perplexed by conditions which deeply concern them. This mental turmoil is usually carefully concealed, but because of their reticence and self-consciousness it is often very difficult to pierce this wall of seeming indifference. I had sensed this attitude many times before it occurred to me that much of the tension underlying this critical period could be eased and deftly handled through the impersonal study of literature and composition which dealt with various phases and possible solutions of many uncertainties and even serious problems which beset adolescents.



In this unit it seems logical that poetry is not necessarily to be studied as poetry, nor essays as essays, and so on with other types of literature. Problems in novels, short stories, poems, essays, plays, and current movies or radio programs are considered and dovetailed to clarify certain points which are being discussed. We examine not only the *sharp contrast* in the characters of the mothers in the books *If I Have Four Apples* and *Mama's Bank Account* and their profound influence on the children of their respective families during the formative years, but also the *great similarity* of characters under widely varying circumstances such as the integrity of Caroline, in *Let the Hurricane Roar*; of Ma, in *The Yearling*; of Mary White, in the essay "Mary White"; of the Owl in "A Matter of Proper Spirit"; and the football star, Chug Arden, in the short story "Stars in the Sky."

The teacher not only uses the selected literature as a character building agency or channel, but also bears in mind the value of pointing out and sometimes reading aloud beautiful passages, vivid descriptions, and effective restrained writing, and showing the author's keen perceptions and flair for using the unusual or common word which is just the right one. A copy of this unit should be available to each of the teachers in those fields previously mentioned in order to acquaint them with the objectives of the course given in English I, and to enable them to point out areas in their subjects where correlation might be emphasized and used for mutual advantage and greater attainments.

The following books and stories, which were the culmination of much thought and sifting, have proved themselves valuable as core material for this program, and the reasons for their inclusion and some objectives which may be attained are briefly suggested below. However, with different local conditions, other selections may be easily substituted.

*If I Have Four Apples* . . . . . Josephine Lawrence

This book is entirely concerned with the economic status of a family that is constantly in debt and addicted to the habit of installment buying. They do not understand how, nor are they ever able, to live within their income.

*Mama's Bank Account* . . . . . Kathryn Forbes

This is a story of an American family—Mama, Papa, and the four children from childhood through adolescence. The main character is Mama, a good manager, who believes in family solidarity and security. This family lives within its income and is a striking contrast to *If I Have Four Apples*.

*Americans All* . . . . . Heydrick

This is a collection of stories concerning problems in which adolescents are deeply interested, such as the worry which comes through the fear of losing a job and the selfishness of members of a family toward each other.

*Let the Hurricane Roar* . . . . . Rose Wilder Lane

This book is one of pure courage. It shows loyalty and staunchness of character, as well as the simple life lived by the pioneers at the time of the land grants. The economic policy of "counting your chickens before they are hatched" is clearly illustrated in this story.

*The Yearling* . . . . . Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings

A story of a lad of fourteen, his longing for comradeship, the economic struggle of the family in the scrubland of Florida, and the great influence of environment on that family.

The short story "Stars in the Sky," taken from the collection entitled *September to June* by Cadigan, is read aloud to the class by the teacher. It describes the social and economic achievements of Chug Arden, a football star, whose parents were immigrants. It contains unusual contrast in family backgrounds and culture, and subtly stresses the importance of etiquette and social poise.

The essay "Mary White" is ideal for every boy and girl to know and appreciate. It should be coupled with the short story "A Matter of Proper Spirit," which shows the uncompromising attitude of a boy who values honor above everything. A problem concerning citizenship is skillfully developed in this story which is read to the class by the teacher.

"An Argument with a Millionaire" is an essay illustrating the happiness which is found in the right vocation.

### PUPIL OBJECTIVES

This unit is necessarily one of slow growth, and if certain objectives are sometimes attained rather unexpectedly, others often require a gradual approach. Nevertheless it is to be desired that many valuable concepts concerning mature problems are left with the class. In order to gain keener insight and perspective concerning life as it is, the student

1. will approach, visualize, and begin to understand through the materials used in this unit, problems of etiquette and personality, as well as those of economics, morals, and ethics.

2. will gain a more complete understanding of himself and his relationships to others with whom he comes in contact.
3. will understand the value of "the milk of human kindness" in contrast to shrewdness, cruelty, opportunism, deceit, or "man's inhumanity to man."
4. will learn to withhold criticism by striving to put himself in the other person's place.
5. will be trained to see similar instances in different stories, to compare and discuss the weaknesses and strengths of the characters involved, to weigh the effective or unconvincing resolutions of the circumstances as drawn by the individual authors, and through these mediums to further his taste for good literature.
6. will be able to apply the knowledge so gained to situations arising in his own family, and among his friends and neighbors.
7. will learn to think critically and be able to give merited praise or condemnation of certain situations or characters. This type of criticism may be stressed so that the student will eventually be able to carry it through to the appraisal of honest or misleading statements in advertising, headlines, editorials, and articles found in current newspapers and periodicals.
8. will consider problems brought up concerning the use and misuse of money; some of the most obvious effects of the unequal distribution of wealth; power attained through social prestige and position; and the grave economic and social factor of chronic illness which is a disaster confronted by many families.
9. will understand the characteristics which tend to produce deserved and lasting popularity and the happy feeling of being accepted and sought after, in contrast to those traits which, if allowed to go unchecked, bring unpopularity and the lonesome feeling of being left out. (Adolescence is an age when one wants to be in things)
10. will understand that great satisfaction is often achieved by doing the right thing with no other thought of reward.
11. will understand that great literature explains the problems of life from the standpoint of human nature, in contrast to exact statistics and facts.



12. will be cognizant of the fact that either much happiness or great frustration will be the result of the occupation he will mainly pursue after he leaves school.
13. will grow in his ability to be agreeable to different groups and different people.
14. will begin to understand the value to the community of the good citizen, and that many of the prerequisites of good citizenship are begun in the home, and fostered and developed by school training.
15. will more clearly realize that his daily major and minor decisions are molding his own character so that as an adult he will be recognized as weak and undesirable, or a person of integrity who is valuable to the community.
16. will gradually begin to perceive the weaknesses and strengths in an author's personality and how they are reflected in his literary productions.
17. will understand that regardless of what else he learns, unless he is able to apply his knowledge in real life situations, the time spent upon his education has been more or less wasted.
18. will feel that if he is leaving school at the end of the ninth year, he is better equipped to cope with some of the baffling problems which will confront him in the world of adults.

### COMPOSITION

Writing in the first semester has been confined largely to the study of good sentence structure, individual spelling errors, functional grammar, and punctuation. Paragraphs and short themes are written for English assignments, but longer compositions including bibliographies and the use of library facilities are required as correlated material for both English and social studies.

In the second semester much of the writing is an outgrowth of the problems discovered and discussed through the reading program. This work is of special interest to the guidance teacher in the field of personal-social relationships because of the many childhood incidents recorded which probably would be found in no other way, and may be valuable for illuminating and explaining the behavior of the student. The central thought of this project is found in its title, *My Biography*. The illustrations are often surprisingly original, and the old pictures of their ancestors down to the modern snapshots of their immediate families, homes, pets,

etc. are very revealing to a keen observer. This series of themes not only helps the child to understand himself and his problems more clearly, but suddenly his own peculiar heritage assumes importance in his mind, and he begins to sense the meaning of human continuity.

When the albums are completed and handed in, they are passed around the class, and the enthusiasm aroused by the books of the others is contagious and exciting. Many of them are beautifully and originally illustrated. Copies of the themes in these booklets are given to the guidance teacher who files them for any necessary future reference. The themes are written at intervals of two weeks and are a change from the reading and discussions which have been carried on.

Suggested topics for the biographies are:

- I. Why My Ancestors Came to This Country
- II. An Interesting Ancestor of Mine
- III. A Story My Father (or any relative) Likes to Tell
- IV. Why My Family Happens to Live in Newark
- V. Some of the Advantages of Living in Newark
- VI. My History or My Life
- VII. My Hobby
- VIII. My Faults
- IX. My Good Traits
- X. How I Have Improved
- XI. My Future

By the time the class has read and discussed *Mama's Bank Account* and *Let the Hurricane Roar*, it is noted that Mama, whom we have come to love, was an immigrant from Norway, and had come here not only for economic reasons, but with the ideal in her heart of being a good American citizen. It is also apparent that Caroline and Charles, characters in *Let the Hurricane Roar*, pushed farther west to take advantage of the virgin soil and gain the benefits of the land grants of that period. At this point it is easy to consider one's own ancestors as book material, and a natural curiosity is aroused as to why they migrated to these shores. It follows that there is much questioning at home. Older relatives, friends, and even neighbors are sought out for their knowledge and reminiscences of the ancestors. Pictures, mementos, and even drawings of family trees are carefully brought to school. All of this preparation makes it an easy matter to write about the family with no hesitation.

Mama's aunts and uncles are enjoyed as unusual characters, and it is a natural procedure to write about "An Interesting Ancestor of Mine." The biographies are now well under way and usually proceed with real interest to the student.

By the time the good and bad traits of several characters have been discussed, it seems not at all embarrassing for the class to write truthfully of their own faults and good characteristics. This leads into a fairly truthful and accurate estimate of progress in the theme "How I Have Improved."

When the whole unit is finished, there is just about time to read Robert Graves' abridged edition of *David Copperfield* which is a masterpiece of characterizations and problems interesting to the adolescent. After explanation of some of the English customs and speech idioms, the book moves along quickly.

### ACTIVITIES FOR EXTRA CREDIT

The student may make his choice of the activities listed and will be given credit for his time, thought, and originality in completing those he selects.

1. Write or be able to give orally a good report on one of the families featured each month in *The Ladies Home Journal*.

2. Make a list of occupations which require courtesy, good English, neat appearance, and a pleasing personality for success.

3. Read a book on etiquette such as *A Young Man About Town* or *Your Manners Are Showing*. Give an oral report on the book you selected.

4. Make a list of people who became famous, but in order to do so had to overcome obstacles such as lack of money, poor health, unsympathetic parents, or other handicaps. Write a paragraph on each explaining how ultimate success was achieved.

5. Write a theme on why you believe, or do not believe mothers should be as well educated as fathers.

6. Find a point in the book *If I Have Four Apples* where the mother could have changed her extravagant ideas, and by using a different procedure could have helped her family in its struggle for economic success—in other words, continue the story to a happy conclusion.

7. Using the same idea, continue an episode from *Mama's Bank Account* to an unsatisfactory ending.

8. At the present time, the cost of food has been the cause of much comment, as it is a major item in the family budget.

- a. Take two or three items and compare their prices from week to week in the same store.



- b. Are the highest priced or the lowest priced foods always the best bargain?

Thought-provoking questions which may be used for class discussion or short themes:

1. What are your comments on the statement which follows:  
We are sometimes startled when people are honest. (Cite examples of unusual or unexpected honesty or dishonesty.)
2. Discuss:
  - a. Is there such a thing as being too kind? too secure?
  - b. A person makes a purchase and is short changed by the merchant. He demands that the error be rectified. An hour later he goes home on the bus but says nothing when the driver neglects to take his fare. At home that evening he boasts about this incident to his family.
3. A girl sacrifices her personal ambitions and becomes the mainstay of a large family. After a time she decides to leave home and enter the business world for which she has been trained in school. Using this idea, write a theme or be able to tell what effect this might have had on members of her family.
4. A girl has worked hard and saved her money for several months. Suddenly she decides she is tired of such a humdrum existence and decides to buy some becoming clothes and take a trip to Bermuda. After a wonderful vacation she comes home with only a little money left and has to begin all over again. Make a list of the benefits and disadvantages which resulted from her trip.
5. A boy has recovered from a serious illness which has made him demanding and selfish even when he has regained his strength. Give an illustration of something which happens to make him realize the type of person he has become. How does he change his attitude so that he becomes a nicer person to know and live with?
6. You sometimes hear a person say, "I am what I am and can't change my disposition." Is he right or is he doing himself an injustice? Explain your answer.
7. Make up an original problem for class consideration.

In conclusion, it is to be desired that this unit will contribute to the final aim that when this course is completed, the child will leave in June with a love for English which will make him look

ahead eagerly to the courses which lie ahead of him in the remaining years of his education.

Following are some unsolicited teacher and pupil comments concerning the unit:

It is the trend we are striving for.

It has been the best source of anecdotal records we have had so far; the pupils write naturally about themselves and their problems.

I enjoy your English classes. I don't know just what makes them so interesting. Maybe it is the grown-up way you talk to us.

"My Biography" has inspired me to do my best work.

I shall always treasure this album.

My family has been very much interested in this project.

## Fall Meeting

The annual fall meeting of the Illinois Association of Teachers of English will be held Friday evening and Saturday, November 3 and 4, on the campus of the University of Illinois. The I.A.T.E. is this year offering a program in collaboration with the Illinois Secondary Schools Curriculum Program and the Department of English and College of Education of the University of Illinois.

Highlight of the Friday evening program will be an address by Professor Dora V. Smith of the University of Minnesota. Miss Smith is a past president of the National Council of Teachers of English and is widely known as a leader in the teaching of English.

Saturday's programs have as their theme "How Teachers of English and Administrators Work Together in Curriculum Revision." After a symposium, eleven discussion groups will consider in detail methods that are being used in different schools in revising the English curriculum. Teachers from Moline, Waukegan, Jacksonville, Rockford, Granite City, Decatur, Robinson, Sycamore, Chicago, Pekin, and Gillespie will lead the discussion. Revision on both the elementary and secondary levels will be considered.

Members of the Executive Board of the I.A.T.E. will hold a preliminary meeting at 5 p.m. on Friday, November 3. This meeting will be adjourned before the 6:30 dinner meeting at which Dr. Smith will speak and at which Professor Gordon Ray, new head of the Department of English at the University, will extend greetings.

Registration of I.A.T.E. members will be held from 8:15 to 9 a.m. Saturday morning. A business meeting will then take place before the rest of the program gets under way. Speaker at the luncheon meeting will be Professor Paul Landis of the University Department of English.

All secondary English and elementary language arts teachers of the state should plan to attend this meeting. It is vital that they keep abreast of the curriculum changes that are occurring.

## Memberships

Until a new treasurer has been elected, I.A.T.E. membership fees (\$2.00) may be sent to C. W. Roberts, 204-A Lincoln Hall, Urbana, Illinois.



## **Mrs. Zada Templeton**

Members of the Association were shocked to learn of the untimely death of Mrs. Zada Templeton on October 1, 1950. For many years Mrs. Templeton served as treasurer of the Association and was one of its most faithful and energetic workers.

Zada Thornsburch Templeton was a graduate of Marshall High School and of the University of Illinois. She taught in DeWitt County, in Urbana, and in Cicero, her span of service to the profession totaling thirty-two years. Her death means a real loss to the teaching profession and particularly to the Illinois Association of Teachers of English.

The Association extends its sincere condolences to the members of Mrs. Templeton's family.